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ABSTRACT

The usefulness of scores on the American College Testing (ACT) program and the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) in predicting whether Grambling State University (Louisiana) students would be placed on academic probation was studied. Additional concerns included: whether there is a critical point or scores on the ACT/SAT that was linked to suspension; whether knowledge of the status of probation was sufficient to deter suspension; the usefulness of placing students on probation; whether students on probation/suspension were aware of university policies; whether students' attitudes toward probation, instructors, and other factors influenced the number of students on probation; and whether students' view of self influences academic performance. Findings indicate that ACT/SAT scores did not predict whether students were placed on probation or suspension. Responses of students on probation and on suspension indicated that they understood the policies but did not follow them. However, those students on suspension showed greater awareness of policy than those on probation. Fourteen recommendations are offered, including continuation of recruitment of students with a wide range of ACT and SAT scores, and expansion of academic services provided through developmental education programs. The questionnaire is appended. (SW)

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Mini Report Research
on

The Extent To Which ACT Scores and Probationary Status Are Casual or Deterrent Factors in the Suspension of Students at GSU

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Associate Dean/College of Education

Presented to

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HE019700

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SPRING 1986

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THE EXTENT TO WHICH ACT/SAT SCORES AND PROBATIONARY STATUS ARE CASUAL OR DETERRENT FACTORS IN THE SUSPENSION OF STUDENTS AT GSU

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SPRING, 1986

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ABSTRACT FOR PRESENTATION

DETERMINING THE BASES FOR EXCELLENCE IN ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF MINORTITY STUDENTS*

Attention has been given to the academic performance of students enrolled in colleges and universities in America since the beginning of institutions of higher education. With the growth of post-secondary institutions, and with student enrollment representing more diverse educational backgrounds and ethic groups, institutions must face the reality of an increase in the nature and causes of difficulties in academic performance of a large number of students especially minorities.

Further, colleges and universities must be sensitive to the fact that, poor academic performance causes economic and emotional drain on the part of parents, loss of state and national dollars, and a threat to the full achievement of the mission and goals of the institutions.

Since Wilson believes that, American Higher Education is a priceless asset, fundamental to the national purpose, it is to be understood that concern must give way to "actions and plans" to insure this nation of the needed national resources - human and otherwise. He stated that:

> "Higher education cannot be spoken of simply in terms of the value of buildings and equipment, the total number of persons served, the teachers involved or the research performed. The nation's institutions ... are all these things but something more... Higher education constitutes a precious national resource essential to the achievement of great national goals and to the achievement of worthy aspirations of individual citizens" - the foundation of a free society.[1]

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[1] Logan Wilson, Shaping American Higher Education, American Council on Education, Washington, D.C. 1972, pp. 18-19.

Grambling State University is committed to higher education and to maintaining academic excellence in spite of an "Open Door " policy. Students from throughout Louisiana, the U.S.A and abroad enroll at the institution. There is a wide range in their ACT/SAT Scores. To meet the needs of students whose abilities differ greatly, a basic program of academic support services, a well designed curriculum and effective instruction enable a larger number of the students to succeed.

In spite of the efforts put forth to serve the needs of all students, many of them encounter a variety of problems which prevent excellence in academic performance and which result in probation and suspension. Studies have shown that academic progress is related to a number of factors. Research data indicate that there tends to be high positive correlation between the ACT or SAT Score and academic performance. There are, however, data that do not give national test scores the major nod for achievement in college, especially in regard to minority students. At GSU, as well as other predominantly Black institutions, the debate continues regarding the relationship of successful performance academically and the strength or level of the ACT or SAT score, other tests and other factors.

Data base for the presentation results from a search of the literature and a research study conducted at GSU to determine the quality of academic performance in terms of ACT and SAT Scores. Thus, it was apparent that a systematic study of the nature of the scores on the ACT or SAT Test and the status of probation, which signals "danger on the Academic journey", could provide definitive data on the problem or open the avenue for further investigation of it. Toward this end the projected research study was proposed.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The statement of the purpose of GSU indicates that its mission is to provide opportunities for all its students to develop intellectually, including those who have been adversely affected by educational and economic deprivation. A large number of students who enroll at GSU are educationally deprived. Deficiencies in education, as well as other limitations of many of the students, are factors which relate to a disproportionate number of them being placed on probation and suspension each semester.

The status of probation and that of suspension both indicate levels of academic deficiency, one more severe than the other. The persistence of the academic problem of probation and suspension results in the waste of the talents of potentially useful minority youth, chiefly blacks.

While ACT Scores, at certain levels, have not been a reliable predictor of success in school for blacks and other students at GSU, and the status of probation appears not to have been an adequate signal for "academic danger", there was a need to design and implement a study to determine the extent to which the factors of "the level of the ACT Score and the status of probation serve as a causal or deterrent" to suspension.

The study set forth seven purposes or sought to answer the following questions:

1. Were ACT/SAT Scores a predictive factor (positively or negatively) in regard to placement on probation?
2. Was there a critical point or score on the ACT/SAT above or below which related positively or negatively to suspension?
3. Was knowledge of the status probation, an academic check point or a warning sufficient to deter suspension?

4. Did the status probation serve a useful purpose?

5. Were students on probation/suspension unaware of the university policies?

6. Did students' attitude toward probation, instructors and other factors influence the number of students on probation?

7. Did students' view of self, or self assessment influence academic performance?

THE BASIC ASSUMPTIONS WERE:

1. That all students whose comprehensive score was three (3) or less would be placed on probation, on suspension.

2. That students whose scores ranged between four (4) and nine (9) would show some variability in performance with the greatest percent experiencing probation, suspension and attrition.

3. That the greatest number of students whose scores ranged from ten (10) to fourteen (14) would earn a GPA between 1.50 to 2.00.

4. That students whose scores ranged between fifteen (15) and nineteen (19) would show a range in GPA from 2.50 to 3.00.

5. That students whose scores were twenty and above (20+) would show consistently a GPA of 3.00 or better.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The findings, based on the analyses of the data are presented in keeping with the purposes of the study. They are outlined as answers to the basic questions as follows:

QUESTION 1: Were ACT/SAT Scores a predictive factor (positively or negatively) in regard to placement on probation?

Summary of the data failed to show conclusively that a certain score on the ACT/SAT was a predictive factor positively or negatively in regard to placement on probation, on suspension. This finding negated the five basic assupmtions which proposed that the quality of the GPA of students could be determined on the bases of high and low scores on the ACT/SAT.

QUESTION 2: Was there a critical point or score on the ACT/SAT above or below which related positively or negatively to suspension?

The distribution of the GPA in relation to ACT or SAT Score as presented did not show that there was a point or score above or below which clearly related to placement on suspension. The five basic assumptions, which projected that students who scored low on the ACT or SAT Test would earn, consistently, low scores; and those who scored high (especially 20 and above) would earn, consistently a GPA of 3.00 or better, were rejected by the data.

QUESTION 3: Was knowledge of the status probation, an academic check point or a warning sufficient to deter suspension?

QUESTION 4: Did the status probation serve a useful purpose?

There was a low positive correlation between the knowledge of being on probation and suspension. Only 43% of the total number of students on probation in the spring were on suspension in the fall. Fifty seven percent of them were in good standing with a GPA of 2.00 or better in the fall. Knowledge of probationary status did serve as an academic check point or a warning for students. However, the data indicated that of the advanced students placed on probation in the spring, a larger number, 68%, moved from probation to suspension in the fall.

The data presented conflicting points of view in answer to questions three and four. According to the data, knowledge of probation did serve as a warning for a smaller number of the students on probation in the spring was on suspension in the

fall. However, a larger number of advanced students on probation in the spring, 1985 was on suspension in the fall, 1985. There were two possibe factors operating: the tendancy on the part of the students to ignore the warning, probation, at more advanced levels, or the warning served a more useful purpose during the earlier years in college.

QUESTION 5: Were students on probation/suspension unaware of the university policies?

Students understood the academic process for implementing academic policies at GSU. Responses of students on probation and on suspension indicated that they understood the policies but did not follow them. A larger number of the students on probation did not understand the academic policies, than those on suspension. It is possible that once students are placed on suspension, they take the time to acquaint themselves with academic policies. Also, during the readmission process students must adhere to University and State regulations to get back in school.

Responses showed that, with one excepttion, (being placed on suspension without being on probaiton), students were knowledgeable or aware of university policies in regard to probation and suspension. Those on probation were not as well informed as those on suspension.

QUESTION 6: Did the students' attitude toward probation, instructors and other factors influence the number of students on probaiton?

Data indicated that the attitudes of students were basically positive. Responses showed that they were aware that they

were aware that they did not put forth sufficient effort to perform satifactorily. Students were definite that some "professors were difficult to understand and showed little concern." Responses registered their sensitivity in regard to: "their weaknesses in certain subject areas, poor advisement, courses taken out of sequence and heavy credit load".

QUESTION 7: Did students view of self or self assessment influence acadmic performance?

A summary of data revealed that students were aware of what they should do to succeed in college. Among the things they felt should be done by them were: devote more time to study, attend classes, drop courses on time, adhere to academic regulations and work closely with advisors. They indicated a need for more teachers who care and felt that courses in Developmental Education provided the help they needed.

The organizer belives that the presentation will provide basic information for an open forum.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Students are required to have taken or to take the ACT or SAT Test to be fully admitted to GSU. To enter certain programs, they must complete national tests and achieve a given GPA. Permission to remain in college depends on the maintenance of academic standards determined by the State.

The Mini-Research Project is dedicated to administrators and the faculty who believe in the mission of GSU and the promise it holds for all students regardless of the nature of the ACT or SAT Score. Toward this end they are committed to a sound curriculum, a well trained and dedicated faculty and basic supporting resources.

The researcher expresses appreciation to President Johnson, whose love for the university is made visible through his hard work. She extends many thanks to Dr. Carter for his support and encouragement in this effort and to those members of the faculty whose chief concern is the academic/social welfare of each student.

With gratitude, the writer acknowledges the ready and able help of Mr. Curtis Payne, Computer Center, whose help was invaluable. Special thanks go to: Ms. Paula Ridgel, secretary, for typing the study, Ms. Bridgette Shane, the dependable student assistant, Ms. Jannette Adger, a Business Major who gave time to the project, Mrs. Ruby Billups who supported the idea and approved requests for information, the members of the Academic Standing Committee whose concern for the academic progress of students prompted the study, Dean Anne Williams and Mrs. Taylor, Basic Studies, for additional test data from the Testing Center, Mrs. Martha S. Ellis for proofreading and Mrs. Hazel Earles, Graphic Arts Center, for editing and compiling the document.

The writer recognizes that the data as analyzed have led to additional questions that need to be considered by continuation of the study.

INTRODUCTION

Grambling State University maintains an "Open Door" policy. Students from throughout Louisiana, the U.S.A. and abroad enroll at GSU. There is a wide range in their ACT/SAT Scores. To meet the needs of students whose abilities differ greatly, a basic program of academic support services, a well designed curriculum and effective instruction enable a larger number of students to succeed.

In spite of the efforts put forth to serve the needs of all students, many of them encounter a variety of problems which result in probation and suspension. Studies have shown that academic progress is related to a number of factors. Some research data indicate that there tends to be a high positive correlation between the ACT or SAT Score and academic performance. There are, however, studies that do not give national test scores the major nod for achievement in college, especially in regard to minority students. At GSU, the debate continues regarding the relationship of successful performance academically and the strength or level of the ACT or SAT score, other tests and other factors.

Taking National and teacher-made tests is a reality for all students at GSU. Grades earned are related to students' ability to perform well on tests and other required class activities. The quality of performance determines placement on probation and suspension.

In the mid to late seventies, faculties throughout GSU began the development of test items in keeping with those on national tests - specifically the NTE. At least twenty-five test items were prepared by every member of the faculty for each course taught. The forward step was under the direction of the Vice President of Academic Affairs, Dr. Carter. This was the beginning of a campus-wide testing plan which is now established as a practice at GSU. Faculty in the College of Education, as well as those in other areas, praised the plan as a means of sensitizing all GSU students to "test taking skills", toward the end of improving academic performance.

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American College Test (ACT), Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). SAT Scores were used where ACT Scores were not available.

CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Attention has been given to the academic performance of students enrolled in colleges and universities in America since the beginning of institutions of higher education. With the growth of post-secondary institutions, and with student enrollment representing more diverse educational backgrounds and ethic groups, institutions must face **the reality** of an increase in the nature and **causes** of difficulties in academic performance on the part of a large number of students, whose academic status has been defined as **probation** or **suspension**.

Since American Higher Education is a **priceless** asset, fundamental to the national purpose, it is to be understood that **concern** must give way to **"actions** and **plans"** to **insure** this nation of the needed national resources - human and otherwise. Logan Wilson says that:

> "Higher education cannot be spoken of simply in terms of the **value** of buildings and equipment, the total number of persons served, the teachers involved or the research performed. The nation's institutions ... are all **these** things but something more... Higher education constitutes a **precious national resource** essential to the achievement of great national goals and to the achievement of **worthy aspirations** of individual citizens" - the **foundation** of a free society.[1]

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[1] Logan Wilson, Shaping American Higher Education, American Council on Educaiton, Washington, D.C., pp 18-19.

Institutions of higher education have designed polices and practices to serve the needs of students with academic deficiencies. The polices are for the purpose of enhancing **retention** and **reducing** attrition due to probation and suspension. Though policies vary somewhat from institution to institution, the **initial** step toward **admission** and **retention** begins with **orientation** and **advisement** of freshman and transfer students. High school records and test scores (ACT or SAT) are used: to determine students' placement in regular education courses, to limit the semester hours or credit load, and to list developmental education courses to be taken.

Since the early fifties, GSU has implemented an admissions/advisement process that **analyzes** the strengths and weaknesses of every freshman and transfer student, and which **directs** them to follow a regular course plan, a developmental education sequence, or a combined program (regular and developmental education courses). The admissions/advisement plan is carefully monitored to **insure** success and to limit the number of students placed on probation. State guidelines are used to define scholastic probation, suspension and readmission.[2]

NEED FOR THE STUDY

During the last decade emphasis on **accountability** in public schools, colleges and universities led to the present **State** requirement that all students admitted to state approved institutions must take either the ACT or the SAT Test. National data indicate or suggest that performance in institutions of higher education, for the most part, is directly related to the score on national entrance tests.

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[2] Grambling State University General Catalog 1985-87, p. 35.

While GSU continues to enjoy an increase in enrollment, each year it is faced with a greater number of students on **probation** and **suspension**. This problem persists in spite of the expanded college-wide efforts to provide academic support services.

Special academic help for students is available through Developmental Education housed in the College of Basic Studies, which embraces the Learning Center. There is a university-wide Title III Testing Program which is designed to assess the **knowledge base** of students during the first two years of college.

Thus, it was apparent that a **systematic study** of the **nature** of the **scores** on the **ACT** or **SAT Test** and the **status** of **probation**, which signals "danger on the Academic journey", **could provide definitive** data on the problem or open the avenue for further investigation of it. Toward **this end** the projected research study was proposed.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The statement of the **purpose** of GSU indicates that its mission is to provide opportunities for all its students to **develop intellectually**, including those who have been **adversely** affected by educational and economic deprivation.[3] A large number of students who enroll at GSU are educationally deprived. **Deficiencies** in **education**, as well as other limitations of many of the students, are **factors** which relate to a disproportionate number of them being placed on probation and suspension each semester.

The status of probation and that of suspension both indicate levels of

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[3] Ibid., p. 16.

academic deficiency, one more severe than the other. The persistence of the academic problem of probation and suspension results in the waste of the talents of potentially useful minority youth, chiefly blacks. Further, poor academic performance causes economic and emotional drain on the part of parents, loss of State dollars, and a threat to the full achievement of the mission and goals of the University.

While ACT Scores, at certain levels, have not been a reliable perdictor of success in school for blacks and other students at GSU, and the status of probation appears not to have been an adequate signal for "academic danger", there was a need to design and implement a study to determine the extent to which the factors of "the level of the ACT Score and the status of probation serve as a causal or deterrent" to suspension.

The proposed study sets forth seven purposes: 1) to determine if the ACT or SAT Score may be considered a predictive factor positively or negatively in regard to probation, 2) to determine if there is a critical point above or below which the ACT Score relates positively or negatively to suspension, 3) to determine if probation is a sufficient warning to deter suspension, 4) to determine if the status, of probation is useful as an academic check point, 5) to determine the extent to which a lack of knowledge of probation/suspension policies influences the number of students placed on probation/suspension , 6) to determine the extent to which the attitude toward probation, instructors and reasons beyond the control of students, were factors influencing the number placed on probation, and 7) to determine the extent to which the student's view of self was a factor sufficient to influence the number place on probation/ suspension. Specifically, answers to the following questions were

sought:

1. Were ACT/SAT Scores a predictive factor (positively or negatively) in regard to placement on probation? *
2. Was there a **critical** point or score on the ACT/SAT **above** or **below** which **related** positively or negatively to suspention?
3. Was knowledge of the status probation, an academic check point or a warning sufficient to **deter** suspension?
4. Did the status **probation** serve a useful purpose?
5. Were students on probation/suspension **unaware** of the university policies?
6. Did students' attitude toward probation, instructors and other factors influence the number of students on probation?
7. Did students' view of self, or self assessment influence academic performance?

BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

1. That all students whose comprehensive score was three (3) or less would be placed on probation, on suspension.
2. That students whose scores ranged between four (4) and nine (9) would show some variability in performance with the greatest percent experiencing probation, suspension and attrition.
3. That the greatest number of students whose scores ranged from ten (10) to fourteen (14) would earn a GPA between 1.50 to 2.00.
4. That students whose scores ranged between fifteen (15) and nineteen (19) would show a range in GPA from 2.50 to 3.00.
5. That students whose scores were twenty and above (20+) would show consistently a GPA of 3.00 or better.**

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* Data from SAT Scores were used where ACT Scores were not available.

** See page 14 - Statement of the Range of Scores.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Students who enter junior colleges, four year colleges and universities today are unique in their physical stamina, capacities to learn, background of experience, learning styles and readiness and desire to learn. All bring to the institution the "selves" they are. They present a challenge to the institutions - a challenge with which institutions must reckon. Educational reform, increase in minority enrollment and academic deficiencies of students are demanding or forcing change in educational policies, plans, processes, programs and provision of personnel (PPPPP). Institutions need teachers who are flexible and sensitive to the needs of the "new" college students - especially those who are ready by virture of time or chronological age to cope with the rigors of college life, but are not ready by virture of academic, social and emotional skills to adjust to the demands of college life.

Recent studies, which led to educational reform, emphasize the need for the type of programs that provide more adequately for students from diverse backgrounds. [4]

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[4] A Call for Change In Teacher Education, National Commission for Excellence in Teacher Education, American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, February 1985.

A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Education Reform, Washington, D.C. National Commission on Excellence in Education, US Department of Education, April, 1983.

Ernest L. Boyer, A Report on Undergraduate Education in America, Harper and Row, New York, 1986

Ernest L. Boyer, High School: A Report on Secondary Education in America, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, New York, Harper and Row, 1985.

John I. Goodland, A Place Called School: Prospects for the Future, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1983.

Integrity in the College Curriculum: A Report to the Academic Community, Association of American Colleges, February, 1985.

Santa Monica College, California, recognized the need for change and the **urgency** to delineate broad philosophical principles useful in guiding the institution in redesigning its programs and in identifying and solving problems of greatest concern academically. A summary of the ideas presented in a symposium held at the college resulted in nine **recommendations** which were to: 1) **expand** student assessment practices and **implement** a continuous advisement process, 2) **establish** a priority for staff development, 3) **explore** methods for increasing income and reducing expenses, 4) **maintain** high quality support services, 5) **emphasize** departmental participation in **decision making**, 6) **determine** ways to enhance instructional quality - focusing on academic standards and classroom expectations, 7) **enforce** policies governing students on **probation** and course prerequisites, 8) **maintain** services necessary to continue a desirable setting for students, faculty and staff and 9) **convert** more positions from part-time to full-time.[5] Recommendations from the Committee received a positive response from the administration, faculty and staff and **are now serving as guidelines** for strengthening the programs.

At Santa Barbara Community College (SBCC) where a high rate of attrition existed, a committee was appointed to: 1) **assess** the effectiveness of the college's **support services**, 2) **review** research on student retention, and 3) **recommend** ways of improving the success of the students by giving more attention to: **academic** skills assessment, **early** academic advisement, **articulation** and **coordination** of support services and **integration** of academic skills assessment into the instrucitonal program.

The Committee **recommended** that a number of strategies be implemented

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[5] Darroach F. Young, Educational Planning in a Changing Environment: A Retrospective of the 1982 Santa Monica College Symposium, October 1985.

to **improve** retention. They included: **assessment** of students' reading, writing and math skills, **assignment** of new students to group advising sessions prior to registration, **requirement** of counseling sessions for students on **academic** and **progress** probation, and a **planned** program of activities to bring about a **match** between the college's goals, programs, structure, environment, expectations and the **needs** and **expectations** of the students. The newly recommended **improvement plan** focused on **assessment, advising** and **early warning of students.** Implementation of the recommendations resulted in general **improvement** and a lower attrition rate.[6]

The effects of a new **probationary policy** that required a GPA of 2.0 to avoid **academic probation** and 60% completion of courses attempted to aviod **progress probation** was tested at Shasta College. Findings indicated that a number of students on **progress probation** were lost or dropped. To reduce attrition, a **probation prevention** plan was instituted. The plan called for working with **probation potential** students since evidence showed that about half of them could be identified before they were placed on probation. Early identification and help, it was felt, would limit the number on probation and reduce attrition.[7]

An **early** alert system designed to reach students in time to reduce probation and attrition was discussed by Barbara T. Lupack. She indicated that the **target groups** of students at Wayne State were those who were placed on probation or suspension, chronically absent, having difficulty

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[6] Elaine Landua Cohen, Assessment, Advising and Early Warning: Strategies for Improving Retention. US Department of Education National Institution of Education. (April 1984 pp. 3-14).

[7] Phillip Gash, (et. al.), Effects of Probation Policy on Student Retention at Shasta College: A Study in Rural Northern California Community College Redding, CA 1982.

with basic writing, term paper writing, test taking, notetaking, reading comprehension, other academic skills and adjustment to college. They were referred to the **Early Alert Program**. The Center Director urged the advisor to discuss the students' expectations, academic preparation, adjustment to college and academic difficulties and to make referrals to the **appropriate** source of assistance.

At least sixty percent of the students benefited from Early Alert help. **Advisors urged** them to seek assistance from the appropriate person or areas. **Reversal** of the **downslip** in mid-term grades resulted from types of help which included: increasing skill in reading, writing, report writing, notetaking, **test taking** and other areas of **identified need**.

Results indicated that the averages of students improved, adjustment to college life was facilitated, **individualized attention** was appreciated, sincere students who were **uncertain of how to get help** were more confident, and there was greater **recognition**, on the part of the advisors and instructors, of the **importance** of general support and **basic skill** training.[8]

A study was conducted at Miami-Dade Community College to determine the **effects** of the **college's computerized academic alert and advisement systems** on the students' academic achievement including: GPA, the number of credits completed and dropped and the strengths and weaknesses of the **academic alert system as perceived by the students and the faculty.**

Findings of the Miami-Dade study revealed that the students indicated that the **most helpful method** of notification of their progress was **directly**

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8 Barbara T. Lupack, Early Alert: Reaching Students in Time, US Office of Eucation, Institute of Education, 1983, pp. 1-19, (Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Writing Center Association, Columbus, MO 1983).

from their instructors. However, the majority of them felt that mid-term progress letters sent to alert them should be continued. Most of the faculty who responded felt that the practice of the academic alert system should be continued for all students, with some modifications.[9]

Harford Community College implemented a more stringent program of academic standards by restricting the number of units the students could take, if their quality point index fell below a given level. Students' demographic characteristics were checked. The demographic check revealed: reasons for failure to re-enroll, how these reasons related to the new academic standards, students' views of the standards, the quality of advising at the college and recommended modification of the standards. Records of those who did not return were surveyed and the advisors.

The study showed that 60% of the students placed on academic suspension was 20 years of age or younger. Sixty eight percent of the students who did not return said they were unable to apply themselves to their studies and 46% of the non-returning studentsindicated that there was a conflict between their job and their studies. Test scores of students whose units were restricted were almost identical to those of the entire student body. Students who did not return (56%) indicated that restrictions on their credit load did not influence their decision not to return and that advisement was important to their success.[10]

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[9] Kamala Anandam, Effectiveness of a Computerized Academic Alert System on Student Performance, US Office of Education National Institution of Education (March, 1984 - pp. 1-14).

[10] John W. Quinley, Rosemary Karr, The Effects of the Restriction Policy on Student Achievement and Enrollment, Office of Institional Research, Grants and Planning (June 1985 - pp. 8-33).

An article written by James E. Russell considered problem areas for students on probation and the role of the academic advisor. He listed the problem areas of students and the logic they used in their mistaken judgment. Errors outlined in student judgment included: enrolled in too many hours, avoided enrolling in courses in which they earned low grades, attempted to drop courses after the deadline, failed to resolve incomplete grades within the time limit, took advanced courses with a weak or inadquate background, enrolled in courses on the advice of a friend, took all courses in the general studies areas early and sought academic or personal help late in the semester.*

According to Russell, the major function of the academic advisor involves interceding and showing the student his mistakes in judgment. He suggested that the advisor should explain to the student how the seemingly logical decisions are illogical and recommend ways to prevent errors in judgment: 1) students on probation should take fewer credit hours ..., 2) students should repeat courses in which low grades were earned as soon as possible ..., 3) advisors should emphasize that a student cannot withdraw from a course after the established deadline ..., 4) advisors should emphasize that students suffer more serious consequences if incompletes are not resolved routinely ..., 5) students should not be urged to continue a scheduled sequence when academic difficulties are encountered, they should repeat some courses, even when a passing grade was earned, especially when the student is weak or ill prepared to continue a sequence ..., 6) students should

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* Should thought be given to the policy of requiring completion of all general education courses early in the college career?

place only limited faith in the course selection of friends ..., 7) advisors should encourage students on probation to combine general and major courses ... and 8) students should be knowledgeable of support resources on the campus and be encouraged to use them as a part of their college experiences.

Russell stated that students on probation should be advised about the most appropriate strategies to bring their GPA up to an acceptable level. He emphasized that, where students are making mistakes "following other students," the advisor should share the experiences he has had with other students on academic probation. It was believed that reducing the common errors made by students would reduce attrition. According to him, students with proper academic counseling, good advisement and careful monitoring would go on to adequate scholastic achievement.[11]

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[11] James E. Russell, "Problem Areas for the Student on Probation: The Role of the Academic Advisor", National Academic Advisory Association Journal, September 1981, pp. 56-58.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE

The basic concern in the study was to determine whether ACT or SAT Scores serve as a **predictive** factor in placement on probation, on suspension and to see if there was a critical point **above** or **below** which ACT or SAT Scores related positively or negatively to probation, to suspension.*

Data for the study were gathered from IBM print-outs, questionnaires and interviews of students who enrolled as freshmen the Fall, 1983 and remained with the university through the Fall, 1985, five semesters. The sources of data included:

1. Print-outs with the following information on all freshman students who enrolled the Fall, 1983 through the Fall, 1985. These data were provided by the Computer Center:

   - SS No., Name, ACT/SAT Scores
   - GPA for each semester
   - Cummulative GPA, Fall, 1983 - Fall, 1985
   - Home addresses and local addresses of students

2. A four-part questionnaire entitled **Factors Affecting Probation and Suspension**.
3. Structured Interview Form - for individual interview of students**

The print-outs were used to compile the information given on each student: ACT/SAT Scores, GPA for each semester, cummulative GPA, semesters on probation and suspension (to the extent possible) and semesters not enrolled. To consider **academic performance** in relation to how students scored on the ACT/SAT Tests, scores of all students who were **continuously** enrolled during the **five** semesters, Fall, 1983 - Fall, 1985, were **organized** into **five** groups.

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* American College Test (ACT), Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). SAT Scores were used where ACT Scores were not available.

** Data not included in this study.

The range of GPA from .00 - 4.00 was divided into eight sections as listed below:*

GROUPING OF ACT/SAT SCORES

Group No.	Score Range
1	3 and below
2	04 - 09
3	10 - 14
4	15 - 19
5	20 and above

RANGE OF GRADE POINT AVERAGES

.00 - .49
.50 - .99
1.00 - 1.99**
2.00 - 2.49
2.50 - 2.99
3.00 - 3.49
3.50 - 3.99
4.00 and above

In the Fall, 1983, 1124 freshman students entered GSU. Of that number, 670 or approximately 60 percent (59,57) was enrolled in the Spring, 1986 - the sixth semester.*** A total of 455 students, whose records were used to provide data for this part of the study, was continuously enrolled for five semesters.

The questionnaire on, Factors Affecting Probation and Suspension, was mailed to all students who were on probation during the Spring Semester, 1985 and all students who were on suspension during the Fall Semester, 1985. A print-out containing home addresses of students was used to mail the question-

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* There is no support or statistical design to justify the groupings.

** The difference in each GPA range is .49, with one exception, that of .99 (1.00 - 1.99).

*** It should be noted that the approximately 60% enrolled this Spring, 1986, was not continuously enrolled during the five semesters.

naires at the beginning of the Easter break, 1986. (A copy of the questionnaire is included in the Appendix.)

Letters were sent to students who **returned** questionnaires, and **who were enrolled** in GSU the spring semester, 1986. They were requested to come to the office of the Chairman of the Academic Standing Committee (the director of the study) for an interview. A **Structured** Interview Form was filled by each student before the interview. Following the completion of the form, each student was interviewed. During the interview, each student was asked to elaborate on points he/she had written. They discussed freely concerns not listed by them and answered and asked questions.*

PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

Supplementary test data collected from the Testing Center in the College of Basic Studies, print-outs of students' records provided by the Computer Center with permission from the Registrar, and the questionnaires completed and returned by the students on probation and suspension, have been **analyzed** and presented in the Tables which follow.** Data in the tables have been interpreted in keeping with the **purposes** of the study and the **questions** to be answered (page 5).

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* The Structured Interview Form **will not be** included in this phase of the the study.

** Data on the **summaries** of the interviews **will not be** presented in this phase of the study. The Study **will be continued** as the research has given rise to **many** questions that cannot be explored within the **present scope** of time.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The data collected, analyzed and presented in the tables which follow sought: to determine if ACT or SAT Scores were predictive as a factor in placement on probation/suspension of students at GSU; to see if there were a critical point or score above or below which related positively or negatively to probation/suspension; to determine whether knowledge of the status, probation, served a useful purpose; to see if students understood probation/suspension policies and procedures at GSU, and to determine if students' attitude and self assessment influenced academic performance.

Table I, **Academic Performance of Students According to ACT/SAT Scores,** gives the range of the cummulative ACT/SAT Scores. The numbers (1,2,3,4,) represent the respective groups into which the scores of the students were organized. How many students scored in a particular **score range** is listed under the designation, **number**. The range of the GPA gives the **lowest** to the **highest** GPA in the respective category, followed by a statement of the **mean** and **standard deviation**.

Data in Table II, **Distribution of GPA in Relation to ACT/SAT Scores,** show the grouping of ACT/SAT Scores representing a score **range** of 1 - 20+. Under each GPA designation the number represents the students whose GPA varied according to their cummulative scores on either the ACT or SAT Test.

Table III, presents a summary of data on **Probation, A Factor in Reducing Suspension**. Table IV, summarizes the data on **Probation, A Factor in Reducing Suspension For Students Who Enrolled the Fall, 1983**. The summary of data in both Tables III and IV show the extent to which students' knowledge of the status, probation, reduced the number placed on suspension, but for different groups.

In Tables V-P through VIII-P and V-S through VIII-S data are summarized on the students' knowledge of **probation, suspension,** academic standards and policies and their attitude toward them; also, their assessment of self and the factors that affected their academic performance.

An analysis of Table I **failed** to show that a score on the ACT/SAT was a **predictive** factor positively or negatively in regard to placement on probation, or suspension. Of interest is the fact that **more** students-achieved scores on the ACT/SAT in the **range** of 10 - 14, (729). The GPA range was 1.03 - 3.81 with a difference in GPA range of 2.78, a mean of 2.52 and a standard diviation of .547. In the score range of 4 - 9, there were 170 students whose GPA ranged from 1.17 to 3.54, with a difference of 2.37, a mean of 2.24 and a standard deviation of .484. The **clustering** of GPA averages for the ACT/SAT score range of 4 - 9, that of 10 - 14 and the variation in academic performance should be noted in terms of ACT Scores and **performance** of GSU students.

The tabulations in Table II show that during the five semesters, the **greatest** number of students who were in good standing academically (GPA Range of 2.00 - 4.00) was in the 10 - 14 ACT/SAT score range (729). It is noted, however, that 677 students, with a score range of 4 - 9, earned **average** to **above average scores**. They were in the GPA range of 2.00 - 4.00.

The five basic assumptions (page 5), were not supported by the data in Tables I and II. While none of the students whose **ACT/SAT Scores** were in the 1 - 3 score range fell in the .00 - .99 GPA range, **six** were in the 2.00 - 2.49, **seven** in the 2.50 - 2.99, and **three** in the 3.00 - 3.49 range. Of the students who scored between 15 and 19, fifty two earned a GPA less than 2.00. However, the greatest number (106) was in the GPA range of 3.00 - 3.49.

One hundred and eighty one (181) students scored **at** or above 20 on the ACT/SAT. Of that number, 66 were in the GPA range of 3.00 - 4.00, 71 between 2.00 - 2.99 and the GPA of 44 student was less that 2.00. The data in Tables I and II **do not** indicate that the **GPA** was **consistently low** for students who earned a low score on the ACT/SAT, and that the GPA was **consistently high** when students performed well on the ACT/SAT Tests (scored 20 or above).

TABLE I

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS ACCORDING TO ACT/SAT SCORES*

RANGE	GROUP	NUMBER	GPA RANGE	MEAN	SD**
3 and below	1	005	1.78 - 2.71	2.37	.377
04 - 09	2	170	1.17 0 3.54	2.24	.484
10 - 14	3	179	1.03 - 3.81	2.52	.547
15 - 19	4	068	1.35 - 3.87	2.74	.599
20 and above	5	033	1.40 - 3.80	2.63	.696
ALL GROUPS		455	1.37 - 3.87	2.45	.570

* Based on Academic Performance of the students who entered as Freshman (Fall, 1983) and were continuously enrolled for five semesters (Fall, 1985.

** Robert Johnson , Elementary Statistics for Business, Dux Bury Publishing Company, Massachusetts, 1980 P. 29.

TABLE II

DISTRIBUTION OF GPA IN RELATION TO ACT/SAT SCORES

ACT/SAT SCORE RANGE	SUMMARY OF THE TABULATION OF AVERAGES ACCORDING TO SCORE RANGE							
	.00-.49	.50-.99	1.00-1.99	2.00-2.49	2.50-2.99	3.00-3.49	3.50-3.99	4.00+
GROUP 1: 1 - 3	00	00	09	06	07	03	00	00
GROUP 2: 4 - 9	25	37	248	299	233	112	30	03
GROUP 3: 10 - 14	11	18	181	219	248	196	61	05
GROUP 4: 15 - 19	01	03	49	83	76	106	55	06
GROUP 5: 20 +	03	04	37	34	37	38	23	05

N = 455 Tabulations represents a GPA for every student for each semester of the five semesters (Fall, 1983 - Fall, 1985)

Data in Table III, which show whether the knowledge of being placed on **probation** related positively or negatively to suspension, suggest that there was a **low positive correlation** between knowledge of the status, probation, and placement on suspension. Of the 548 students on probation the spring of 1985, 234 of them or 43% were on suspension the fall of 1985. Three hundred and fourteen or 57% were in **good standing.**

The data given in Table IV revealed that when advanced students were placed on probation, a greater number of them were placed on suspension the following semester. Of the number of students continuously enrolled for five semesters (455), 25 were on probation the spring 1985, with 17, or 68% on suspension the fall of 1985 and 8 or 32% in good standing. Even though the number was small, the **implication** is that precentage wise, **more** advanced college students moved from probation to suspension than did beginners, should **not** be overlooked.

According to evidence presented in Table III, knowledge of the status, probation, **served** as a **warning**, or an academic **check point**. Data in Table IV, however, suggest that probation "as a warning" is more useful during the **earlier** years than the later years in college.

In Tables V-P and V-S responses of students to items on academic standards, probation and suspension, showed that with two exceptions, numbers 8 and 10, they understood the academic policies implemented at GSU and indicated that the policies **were** discussed in **Orientation** and other classes.* Tables VI-P and VI-S show similar responses with one exception number 3. It appeared not to be **clear** to students on probation

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* The notations P and S following the number on the table refer to responses of students on PROBATION and on SUSPENSION.

and on suspension, that one may be placed on suspension without having been on probation. However, the students on suspension showed greater awareness of the policy than those on probation.

TABLE III

PROBATION, A FACTOR IN REDUCING SUSPENSION

TOTAL NUMBER ON PROBATION SPRING 1985	NUMBER ON SUSPENSION FALL, 1985	NUMBER OFF PROBATION FALL, 1985	PERCENT	
			ON SUSPENSION FALL, 1985	IN GOOD STANDING FALL, 1985
548	234	314	43	57

TABLE IV

PROBATION, A FACTOR IN REDUCING SUSPENSION - FOR STUDENTS WHO ENROLLED, FALL, 1983

TOTAL NUMBER ON PROBATION SPRING	NUMBER ON SUSPENSION FALL, 1985	NUMBER OFF PROBATION FALL, 1985	PERCENT	
			ON SUSPENSION FALL, 1985	IN GOOD STANDING FALL, 1985
25	17	8	68	32

TABLE V - P

Students' Understanding of Academic Standards Implemented at GSU

ITEMS	RESPONSES			
Academic Standards Implemented at GSU:	YES		NO	
	NO	PCT	NO	PCT
1. Are required by the State	13	84	02	16
2. Are carried out at GSU in keeping with State Regulations	15	100	00	00
3. Are discussed in Orientation classes	14	93	01	07
4. Are reviewed in other classes	10	67	05	33
5. Are explained by counselors/advisors	10	67	05	33
6. Are published in the University Catalog	14	93	01	07
7. Are **clearly** understood by me, and followed	11	73	04	27
8. Are **clearly** understood by me, but not followed	04	27	11	73
9. Are explained by me to my parents/guardians	11	73	04	27
10. Are not understood by me	05	33	10	67
11. Are useful **benchmarks** or **guidelines** for students	13	87	02	13
12. Are policies that should be **stressed** in Special Convocations	12	80	03	20

TABLE V - S

Students' Understanding of Academic Standards Implemented at GSU

ITEMS	RESPONSES			
Academic Standards Implemented at GSU:	YES		NO	
	NO	PCT	NO	PCT
1. Are required by the State	27	90	03	10
2. Are carried out at GSU in keeping with State Regulations	26	87	04	13
3. Are discussed in Orientation classes	20	67	10	33
4. Are reviewed in other classes by instructors	15	50	15	50
5. Are explained by counselors/advisors	20	67	10	33
6. Are published in the University Catalog	24	80	06	20
7. Are **clearly** understood by me, and followed	19	63	11	37
8. Are **clearly** understood by me, but not followed	12	40	18	60
9. Are explained by me to my parents/guardians	14	27	16	53
10. Are not understood by me	16	53	14	47
11. Are useful **benchmarks** or **guidelines** for students	26	87	04	13
12. Are policies that should be **stressed** in Special Convocations	28	93	02	07

TABLE VI - P

Students' Knowledge of Probation and Suspension Policies at GSU

ITEMS	RESPONSES			
	YES		NO	
Knowledge of Probation/Suspension Policies:	NO	PCT	NO	PCT
1. Probation is a **warning** that one's GPA is **unsatisfactory**.....	15	100	00	00
2. One must be **on probation** before being placed on suspension.....	15	100	00	00
3. One may be placed on suspension **without** being on probation.....	05	33	10	67
4. Failure to earn a GPA of 2.0 when on probation results in suspension.....	13	87	02	13
5. **Suspension** requires a letter of appeal for **readmission**.....	13	87	02	13
6. Readmission on a **second appeal** (2nd letter) requires a GPA of 2.0.....	14	93	01	07
7. After a semester on suspension, one is eligible for readmission.....	13	87	02	13
8. After **four** suspensions, one **must stay out** one year.....	13	87	02	13
9. Intersession for the fifth readmission is by the President.....	14	93	01	07
10. The **fifth** suspension results in **final dismissal**.....	14	93	01	07

TABLE VI - S

Students' Knowledge of Probation and Suspension Policies at GSU

ITEMS	RESPONSES			
Knowledge of Probation/Suspension Policies:	YES		NO	
	NO	PCT	NO	PCT
1. Probation is a **warning** that one's GPA is **unsatisfactory**.....	30	100	00	00
2. One must be **on probation** before being placed on suspension.....	28	93	02	07
3. One may be placed on suspension **without** being on probation.....	14	47	16	53
4. Failure to earn a GPA of 2.0 when on probation results in suspension.....	28	93	02	07
5. **Suspension** requires a letter of appeal for **readmission**.....	28	93	02	07
6. Readmission on a **second appeal** (2nd letter) requires a GPA of 2.0.....	24	80	06	20
7. After a semester on suspension, one is eligible for readmission.....	27	90	03	10
8. After **four** suspensions, one must **stay out** one year.....	24	80	06	20
9. Intersession for the fifth readmission is by the President.....	23	76	07	24
10. The **fifth** suspension results in **final dismissal**.....	28	93	02	07

An examination of data in Tables VII-P and VII-S revealed that students on probation and on suspension were generally **positive** in their attitude toward reasons for probation/suspension. The respondents showed that they:

- did not take academic warnings seriously - 2.
- felt that they had let themselves and their families down 6-7.
- felt that they could have done better - 8.
- varied in their feelings about No. 11

  However, there were **indications** that some instructors were **difficult to understand**, showed little patience and concern. This was **definite** with students on probation and suspension.

- were aware of their weaknesses in certain subject areas - 13-e.
- were concerned about poor advisement, courses out sequence and heavy credit loads - 13 - f, g, h.

Data pertaining to students assessment of "self" as a factor affecting probation and suspension, **given** in Tables VIII-P and VIII-S, sugesst that the students were capable of taking an objective look at themselves and the academic process. This was revealed in high **positive** responses to Nos. 13 through 21, with number 19 as an exception.

Students showed that they were aware that:

- they **could** do satisfactory work
- they needed to devote more time to study
- they needed to attend classes; needed more academic help
- Developmental Education provided the help needed
- they needed teachers who cared
- they needed to study more and work less
- they should drop classes on time, know academic regulations and work more closely with their advisors.

It was not clear what students meant in regard to "registering on time", since 67% of the students on probation and 57% of those on suspension responded "no" to, "I need to register on time" (No. 19).

Excluding the exception, noted above, students understood the policies and procedures regarding "academic standing". They showed positive attitudes toward the university policies, believed they could succeed in college, and **knew** what they **should do** to make satisfactory progress at GSU.

With the evidence as demonstrated above of the perception, by students, of what **their behavior** should be to succeed in college, there appears to be a gap in the knowledge of what **should be done** and **what is done** to succeed in college. The gap is possibly due to advisement/monitoring, on the part of the college, and to direction/motivation on the part of the students.

TABLE VII - P

Attitude of Students Placed on Probation

ITEMS	RESPONSES			
Attitude Toward Probation - When Placed on Probation I:	YES		NO	
	NO	PCT	NO	PCT
1. Did not understand what it meant	07	47	08	53
2. Did not take the academic **warning** seriously	10	67	05	33
3. Lost interest in school	04	27	11	73
4. Did not return the following semester	06	40	09	60
5. Was frightened - did not know where to go for help	09	60	06	40
6. Felt that I had **let myself down**	14	93	01	07
7. Felt that I had let **my family down**	14	93	01	07
8. Felt that I could have done better	15	100	00	00
9. Felt guilty and ashamed	13	87	02	13
10. Felt that late registration was the reason	05	33	10	67
11. Felt that it was the fault of the instructor who:				
a. was difficult to understand	07	47	08	53
b. showed little concern	08	53	07	47
c. did not take time to explain/to answer questions	07	47	08	53
d. used a teaching style that consisted of - lecture only	05	33	10	67
e. did not know the subject matter	06	40	09	60
f. missed class often	02	13	13	87
g. came late, dismissed early	04	27	11	73

TABLE VII - P Contd

Attitude of Students Placed on Probation

ITEMS	RESPONSES			
Attitude Toward Probation - When Placed on Probation I:	YES		NO	
	NO	PCT	NO	PCT
12. Felt that it wasn't my fault	04	27	11	73
13. Felt that the reasons were beyond my control:				
a. entered late, lack of funds	04	27	11	73
b. lack of money for books	09	60	06	40
c. illness in the family	07	47	08	53
d. illness on my part	07	47	08	53
e. weaknesses in certain subject areas	12	80	03	20
f. poor advisement	07	47	08	53
g. took courses out of sequence	06	40	09	60
h. credit load to heavy, too much work	04	27	11	73
14. Didn't care; now I am concerned	04	27	11	73

TABLE VII - S

Attitude of Students Placed on Suspension

ITEMS	RESPONSES			
	YES		NO	
Attitude Toward Probation - When Placed on Probation I:	NO	PCT	NO	PCT
1. Did not understand what it meant	12	60	12	40
2. Did not take the academic **warning** seriously	20	67	10	33
3. Lost interest in school	09	30	21	70
4. Did not return the following semester	17	56	13	44
5. Was frightened - did not know where to go for help	18	60	12	40
6. Felt that I had **let myself down**	26	87	04	13
7. Felt that I had let **my family down**	27	90	03	10
8. Felt that I could have done better	28	93	02	07
9. Felt guilty and ashamed	22	73	08	27
10. Felt that late registration was the reason	07	23	23	77
11. Felt that it was the fault of the instructor who:				
a. was difficult to understand	17	56	13	44
b. showed little concern	16	53	14	57
c. did not take time to explain/to answer questions	12	40	18	60
d. used a teaching style that consisted of - lecture only	14	47	16	53
e. did not know the subject matter	10	33	20	67
f. missed class often	09	30	21	70
g. came late, dismissed early	05	17	25	83

TABLE VII - S Contd

Attitude of Students Placed on Suspension

ITEMS	RESPONSES			
Attitude Toward Probation - When Placed on Probation I:	YES		NO	
	NO	PCT	NO	PCT
12. Felt that it wasn't my fault	12	40	18	60
13. Felt that the reasons were beyond my control:				
a. entered late, lack of funds	09	30	21	70
b. lack of money for books	13	43	17	57
c. illness in the family	11	37	19	63
d. illness on my part	13	43	17	57
e. weaknesses in certain subject areas	19	63	11	37
f. poor advisement	12	40	18	60
g. took courses out of sequence	14	47	16	53
h. credit load to heavy, too much work	10	33	20	67
14. Didn't care; now I am concerned	17	56	13	44

TABLE VIII - P

Students' Assessment of Self and Factors Affecting Probation

ITEMS	RESPONSES			
View of Self - Factors that Affected Performance:	YES		NO	
	NO	PCT	NO	PCT
1. I am under twenty (20)	02	13	13	87
2. I am over twenty (20)	11	73	04	27
3. My parents are living - I live with them	10	67	05	33
4. My parents are living - I do not live with them	05	33	10	67
5. May parents are divorced	02	13	13	87
6. I am married - a wife and children	05	33	10	67
7. I am a single parent with young children	05	33	10	67
8. I completed High School with a B average or better	07	47	08	53
9. I completed High School with a C average or better	09	60	06	40
10. I completed High School with a less than a C average	00	00	15	100
11. I did well my first semester in college	11	73	04	27
12. I can do satisfactory work in college	15	100	00	00
13. I need to devote more time to study	15	100	00	00
14. I need to attend classes	11	73	04	27
15. I need more academic help	15	100	00	00
16. I needed Developmental Education; which provided adequate help	09	60	06	40
17. I need more teachers who teach and care	12	80	03	20
18. I need funds, work interfers with study	08	53	07	47
19. I need to register on time	05	33	10	67
20. I need to drop classes at the appropriate time	09	60	06	40
21. I need to know academic policies; work closely with my advisor	11	73	04	27

TABLE VIII - S

Students' Assessment of Self and Factors Affecting Suspension

ITEMS	RESPONSES			
View of Self - Factors that Affected Performance:	YES		NO	
	NO	PCT	NO	PCT
1. I am under twenty (20)	02	06	28	94
2. I am over twenty (20)	22	73	08	27
3. My parents are living - I live with them	23	76	07	24
4. My parents are living - I do not live with them	08	27	22	73
5. My parents are divorced	12	14	28	60
6. I am married - a wife and children	02	06	28	94
7. I am a single parent with young children	04	13	26	87
8. I completed High School with a **B** average or better	07	23	23	77
9. I completed High School with a **C** average or better	24	80	06	20
10. I completed High School with a **less** than a **C** average	02	06	28	94
11. I did well my first semester in college	23	76	07	24
12. I can do satisfactory work in college	30	100	00	00
13. I need to devote more time to study	28	93	02	07
14. I need to attend classes	24	80	06	20
15. I need more academic help	22	73	08	27
16. I needed Developmental Education; which provided adequate help	17	56	13	44
17. I need more teachers who teach and care	24	80	06	20
18. I need funds, work interfers with study	18	60	12	40
19. I need to register on time	13	43	17	57
20. I need to drop classes at the appropriate time	13	76	07	24
21. I need to know academic policies; work closely with my advisor	27	90	03	10

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Grambling State University provides opportunities for all students who enroll to develop intellectually and socially, including those who have been adversly affected by educational and economic deprivation. Educational as well as other limitations of a number of the students are factors that cause a disproportinate number of them to be placed on probation and suspension each semester.

Purposes of the study were: 1) to determine if ACT Scores may be considered a predictive factor positively or negatively in regard to probation, 2) to determine if there was a critical point above or below which the ACT Score related positively or negatively to suspension, 3) to determine if probation was a sufficient warning to deter suspension, 4) to determine if the status, probation, was useful as an academic check point, 5) to determine the extent to which a lack of knowledge of probation/suspension policies influenced the number of students placed on probation/suspension, 6) to determine the extent to which the attitude toward probation, instructors and reasons beyond the control of students were factors that influenced the number placed on probation, and 7) to determine the extent to which the student's view of self was a factor sufficient to influence the number placed on probation/suspension.

Data for the study were based on computer print-outs which provided information on 455 students, who were continuously enrolled from the Fall, 1983 through Fall, 1985. (See pages 14 and 19). Responses to questionnaires sent to students on probation the spring of 1985 and those on suspension the Fall, 1985 provided additional data for the research project.

Findings of the study were summarized in the tables presented in chapter IV.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The **findings**, based on the analyses of the data given in the tables above, are presented in keeping with the **purposes** of the study. They are presented as answers to the basic questions which follow. *

QUESTION 1: Were ACT/SAT Scores a predictive factor (positively or negatively) in regard to placement on probation?

Summary of the data in Table I **failed** to show conclusively that a certain score on the ACT/SAT was a predictive factor positively or negatively in regard to placement on probation, on suspension (P. 17). This finding **negated** the five basic assumptions (page 5) which proposed that the quality of the GPA of students could be determined on the bases of **high** and **low** scores on the ACT/SAT.

QUESTION 2: Was there a critical point or score on the ACT/SAT above or below which related positively or negatively to suspension?

The distribution of the GPA in relation to ACT or SAT Score as presented in Table II did not show that there was a **point** or **score above** or **below** which clearly related to placement on suspension. The five basic assumptions, which **projected** that students who **scored** low on the ACT or SAT Test would earn, consistently, low scores; and those who scored high (especially 20 and above) would earn, consis-

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* See statement of the Purposes and Questions, Pages 3-5.

tently a GPA of 3.00 or better, were **rejected** by the data in Tables I and II.

QUESTION 3: Was knowledge of the status probation, an academic check point or a warning sufficient to deter suspension?

QUESTION 4: Did the status probation serve a useful purpose?

There was a **low** positive correlation between the knowledge of being on probation and suspension as shown in Table III. Only 43% or 234 of the total number of students on probation in the spring were on suspension in the fall. Three hundred and fourteen or 57% of them were in good standing with a GPA of 2.00 or better in the fall. Knowledge of probationary status **did serve** as an academic check point or a **warning** for students. However, data in Table IV indicated that of the 25 advanced students placed on probation in the spring, a larger number, 17 or 68%, moved from probation to suspension in the fall.

Data in Tables III and IV present **conflicting** points of view in answer to questions **three** and **four**. According to Table III, knowledge of probation **did** serve as a **warning** for a smaller number of the students on probation in the spring was on suspension in the fall. Table IV indicated the reverse. A larger number of the students on probation in the spring, 1985 was on suspenstion in the fall, 1985. Seventeen or 68% of those on probation in the spring was on suspension in the fall. There were, however, two possible

factors operating: the tendency on the part of the students to ignore the warning, probation, at more advanced levels, or the warning served a more useful purpose during the earlier years in college.

QUESTION 5: Were students on probation/suspension unaware of the university policies?

As indicated in Tables V-P and V-S, students understood the academic process for implementing academic policies at GSU. In regard to Nos. 7 and 8, responses of students on probation and on suspension indicated that they understood the policies **but did not follow** them. With respect to No. 10, 67% of the students on probation **did not** understand the academic policies, while 53% of those on suspension, (Table V-S), **did not** understand them. There is a question regarding the conflicting responses as shown in numbers 7-8 and 10 in Tables V-P and V-S. It is possible that once students are placed on suspension, they take the time to acquaint themselves with academic policies. Also, during the readmission process students **must adhere** to University and State regulations to get back in school.

Responses in Tables VI-P and VI-S showed that, with one exception, No. 3, students were **knowledgeable** or **aware** of university policies in regard to probation and suspension. Those on probation were not as well informed (33%) as those on suspension (47%).

QUESTION 6: Did the students' attitude toward probation, instructors and other factors influence the number of students on probation?

Data in Tables VII-P and VII-S indicated that the attitudes of students were basically positive. Responses showed that they were aware that they did not put forth sufficient effort to perform satisfactorily. Students were definite that some "professors were difficult to understand and showed little concern." Responses registered their sensitivity in regard to: "their weaknesses in certain subject areas, poor advisement, courses taken out of sequence and heavy credit load".

QUESTION 7: Did students view of self or self assessment influence academic performance?

A summary of data in Tables VIII-P and VIII-S revealed that students were aware of what they should do to succeed in college. Among the things they felt should be done were: devote more time to study, attend classes, drop courses on time, adhere to academic regulations and work closely with advisors. They indicated a need for more teachers who care and felt that courses in Developmental Education provided the help they needed.

LIMITATIONS

Data for the study were based on information on students who enrolled as freshman in the fall, 1983. Validity of the study was strengthened by several factors including:

1. Review of literature that consisted of the extent to which ACT and SAT Test Scores and other factors affected probation, suspension and retention.

2. Use of systematic data on students over a period of five semesters.

3. Responses of students to a four-part questionnaire.

CONCLUSIONS

Findings of the study seem to warrant the following conclusions.

1. ACT Scores cannot be relied on as the factor predictive of academic success - especially for GSU students. However, those who earned higher scores **tended** to perform better, but **this** was not consistent.*

2. There was no critical point or score on the ACT or SAT Test that related positively or negatively to probation, to suspension. To be noted, however, was the fact that some students who earned low scores performed well academically and some who scored high peformed poorly.

3. Knowledge of the status, probation, served positively as a check point or warning in limiting the number on suspension. This fact appeared to be more pronounced at freshman /sophomore levels than at the more advanced levels.

4. In keeping with the above statement (No. 3) the status probation did serve a useful purpose.

5. Students on probation and suspension were basically aware of the university policies governing academic standards. However, they seemed not to understand that one may be **placed** on suspension **without** having been placed on probation.

6. Students showed positive attitudes toward instructors and other factors that influenced placement on probation and suspension. However, considerable concern was shown in regard to: "difficulty in understanding some professors, non-caring professors, poor advisement, courses taken out of sequence, weaknesses in certain subject areas and heavy credit loads".

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* Developmental Education is possibly a factor in "low score/high performance".

7. Students showed an objective view of self and their need to assume responsibility basic to success in college. Their concern regarding advisement and interested professors suggested that there is a **need** for more **caring** professors and **better** advisement. They felt that courses in Developmental Education were **needed** and were **helpful**.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of findings in this study the following recommendations seem justifiable:

1. That in its recruitment program GSU would **continue** to **encourage** students with a **wide range** of abilities as defined by ACT and SAT Scores to enroll.

2. That **academic services** provided through Developmental Education would be **continued, strengthen** and **expanded** and that **more attention** would be given to faculty loads in keeping with **a plan** that permits instructors to teach **both** regular and Developmental Education courses - especially in English and Mathematics. (Note the article in the Shreveport Times, Sunday, June 8, 1986 in the Appendix and No. 16, pgs. 34-35.)

3. That through an **expanded scholarship program**, special effort would be put forth to attract more students with high scores on national tests, and at the same time, however, an **experimental** scholarship program would be **established** for students who demonstrate **academic potential** defined through other means.

4. That a "short-term" loan fund be expanded to help needy students secure books at the beginning of the semester, and that consideration be given to the **establishment of** a **plan** for students on "work-study" and other types of aid to **contract** with a **special loan service** or the bookstore for books until their **aid packages** are available.

5. That the "academic jet lag" between arrival, registration and the beginning of classes, (which appears to **limit** some students' **thrust for academic business**), be given more consideration(Note No. 6 as one possible approach).

6. That **instruction sheets** giving information on course numbers, titles, texts and **what** the student **is required to have read for the first day of class**, be provided by Colleges and or Schools, (**posted** in dormitories, colleges, schools and made available in the **library** and the bookstore).

7. That the **established** procedure which **directs classes** to **begin** with **basic** instruction on the first day the class meets, be **adhered** to **throughout** the university.

8. That Faculty Development Seminars be conducted by Colleges, Schools and Departments to: 1) **review** and or orient **all** faculty members to the **need** to **emphasize**, in each of their classes, the **importance** of students **knowing** and **adhering** to the academic policies and regulations set by the State and the University, 2) **review** course outlines, **discuss** the **reasons** why the **requirements** of each course should be satisfied, 3) **re-state** the need for giving **every** student, in **writing**, the **stipulations** for official enrollment in class and attendance and 4) **re-emphasize** the **need** for **instructors to check** class rosters.

9. That the Long Range Plans for Departments include strategies for keeping students **abreast** (periodical reminders) of "How to Go to College" - their responsibility for their **college business** in spite of emergencies and urgent personal or social needs.

10. That Orientation of new and transfer students would include a **common module** that covers, in detail, **academic policies/procedures, the role/responsibility of a college student and how to secure help with special problems.**

11. That attention be given to a **suspension prevention** plan which strengthens and **insures early identification** of students who are having difficulty with reading, reading comprehension, writing, writing papers, notetaking, basic courses in General Studies; those who are chronically absent, on probation, readmitted on suspension and in need of **systematic counseling**; and that a **warning** in addition to deficient grades be considered.*

12. That a GSU - Student Academic Service Corps (SASC) be **established** by **identifying** students with merit-type scholarships; that their academic strengths be **determined** and that they be assigned volunteer hours to work with respective students and teachers in Developmental Education - A GSU Service Project that would give **recognition** at Honors Day and or the Opening Convocation, etc.

13. That more **concerned support** and effort be given by administrators, faculty and campus media to the **dissemination** of information (from the ASC), which is designed to **alert** students, (near the end of each semester) to the **academic policies** and **procedures** for READMISSION, if placed on suspension; and that **more careful attention**, be given to the **announcements** to **limit** stress/anxiety on the part of parents. Such help would **facilitate** the work of the Academic Standing Committee, **a support for GSU.**

14. That more attention be given to the **importance** of **correctly written** letters and that students be given **more** practice in **writing letters** for various reasons - including letters to the ASC for **readmission.**

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* Credit hour load for students on **probation**, on **suspension** should be carefully monitored by advisors. There would be exceptions in **special** cases.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

The present research, limited in time and scope, gave rise to questions that suggest the need to **expand** the current study by:

1. Determining the extent to which there is a **significant difference** in the performance of students who **earn** a low score and high score on the ACT and a low score and high score on the SAT Tests.

2. Determining the percent of all students enrolled, placed on probation and on suspension during the last five semesters.

3. Determining whether or not percentage wise, more students at the freshman/sophomore levels go from probation to suspension than juniors and seniors.

4. Determining if there is a **pattern** of low academic performance or of high academic performance in relations to **paired low** and **high** scores on ACT Tests:

   English - Math
   English - Science
   English - Social Science
   Math - Science

5. Determining if there is any relationship between the academic performance on the ACT Test and responses on the questionnaire and written and oral interviews of selected students in each of the five score ranges from low to high, page 14.

6. Determining whether there is a significant difference in the knowledge of academic policies and procedures of **non**-probation/suspension students and those **on** probation/suspension.

7. Determining if there is a significant difference in the knowledge of academic rules and regulations, attitudes toward instructors, factors beyond control, and self assessment of students at several state schools, such as GSU, SUBR, SUNO Northwestern, Nicholls State, Louisiana Tech.

NOTE: The **questionnaire** and **ideas** for future study **are not** to be used **without** the approval of the research/writer - Helen Richards-Smith.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

Form No. _____
Sp., 1985: Prob. ___ Susp.___
Fall, 1985: Prob. ___ Susp.___

Classification____
Major_____
Adm. GSU_____

QUESTIONNAIRE: FACTORS AFFECTING PROBATION/SUSPENSION

Dear Student: ATTENTION! You are asked to **respond** to this questionnaire to provide information to help the University and the Academic Standing Committee understand the reasons why you were on **probation** or **suspension** during the Spring, 1985 or Fall, 1985 semester. The data will help us to better serve your needs and plan effective ways of working with you to **reduce** the number of probations and suspensions that occur each semester at GSU. **Please** check **yes** or **no** in the appropriate space and **return** the questionnaire in the self-addressed envelope or bring it to Adams Hall, Rm. 116 by **April 10.**

I. ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Academic Standards Implemented at GSU:

		RESPONSE Yes	No
1.	Are required by the State.	1.	
2.	Are carried out at GSU in keeping with State Regulations.	2.	
3.	Are discussed in Orientation classes.	3.	
4.	Are reviewed in other classes by instructors.	4.	
5.	Are explained by counselors/advisors.	5.	
6.	Are published in the University Catalog.	6.	
7.	Are **clearly** understood by me, and followed.	7.	
8.	Are **clearly** understood by me, but not followed.	8.	
9.	Are explained by me to my parents/guardians.	9.	
10.	Are not understood by me.	10.	
11.	Are useful **benchmarks** or **guidelines** for students.	11.	
12.	Are policies that should be **stressed** in Special Convocations.	12.	

II. PROBATION - SUSPENSION

Knowledge of Policies:

		RESPONSE Yes	No
1.	Probation is a **warning** that one's GPA is **unsatisfactory.**	1.	
2.	One must be **on probation** before being placed on suspension.	2.	
3.	One may be placed on suspension **without** being on probation.	3.	
4.	Failure to earn a GPA of 2.0 when on probation results in suspension.	4.	
5.	**Suspension** requires a letter of appeal for **readmission.**	5.	
6.	Readmission on a **second appeal** (2nd letter) requires a GPA of 2.0.	6.	
7.	After a semester on suspension, one is eligible for readmission.	7.	
8.	After **four** suspensions, one must **stay out** one year.	8.	
9.	Intersession for the fifth readmission is by the President.	9.	
10.	The **fifth** suspension results in **final dismissal.**	10.	

III. ATTITUDE

Attitude Toward Probation - When Placed on Probation I:

		RESPONSE Yes	No
1.	Did not understand what it meant.	1.	
2.	Did not take the academic warning seriously.	2.	
3.	Lost interest in school.	3.	
4.	Did not return the following semester.	4.	
5.	Was frightened - did not know where to go for help.	5.	
6.	Felt that I had let myself down.	6.	
7.	Felt that I had let my family down.	7.	
8.	Felt that I could have done better.	8.	
9.	Felt guilty and ashamed.	9.	
10.	Felt that late registration was the reason.	10.	
11.	Felt that it was the fault of the instructor who:		
	a. was difficult to understand.	a.	
	b. showed little concern.	b.	
	c. did not take time to explain/to answer questions.	c.	
	d. used a teaching style that consisted of - lecture only.	d	
	e. did not know the subject matter.	e.	
	f. missed class often.	f.	
	g. came late, dismissed early.	g.	
12.	Felt that it wasn't my fault.	12.	
13.	Felt that the reasons were beyond my control:		
	a. entered late, lack of funds.	a.	
	b. lack of money for books.	b	
	c. illness in the family.	c.	
	d. illness on my part.	d.	
	e. weaknesses in certain subject areas.	e.	
	f. poor advisement.	f.	
	g. took courses out of sequence.	g.	
	h. credit load too heavy, too much work.	h.	
14.	Didn't care; now I am concerned.	14.	

IV. STUDENT'S VIEW OF SELF - FACTORS THAT AFFECTED PERFORMANCE

Self Assessment

		RESPONSE Yes	No
1.	I am under twenty (20).	1.	
2.	I am over twenty (20).	2.	
3.	My parents are living - I live with them.	3.	
4.	My parents are living - I do not live with them.	4.	
5.	My parents are divorced.	5.	
6.	I am married - a wife and children.	6.	
7.	I am a single parent with young children.	7.	
8.	I completed High School with a **B** average or better.	8.	
9.	I completed High School with a **C** average or better.	9.	
10.	I completed High School with a **less** than a **C** average.	10.	
11.	I did well my first semester in college.	11.	
12.	I can do satisfactory work in college.	12.	
13.	I need to devote more time to study.	13.	
14.	I need to attend classes.	14.	
15.	I need more academic help.	15.	
16.	I needed Developmental Education; which provided adequate help.	16.	
17.	I need more teachers who teach and care.	17.	
18.	I need funds, work interfers with study.	18.	
19.	I need to register on time.	19.	
20.	I need to drop classes at the appropriate time.	20.	
21.	I need to know academic policies; work closely with my advisor.	21.	

ATTENTION: **Parents/Guardians**
Please **see** that your son/daughter **gets** this questionnaire and return it.

RETURN TO:

DR. HELEN RICHARDS-SMITH
P.O. BOX 326
GRAMBLING, LOUISIANA 71245
(318) 247-6648 or (318) 274-2286

APPENDIX B

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

(RELATING TO THE STUDY)

51% of La. freshmen in remedial courses

By MELANIE MARKLEY
Times Enterprise Writer

More than half the freshmen in Louisiana colleges had to take at least one remedial course last year to prepare for college-level studies.

The figure is about twice the national average. About one-fourth of the students nationwide have to take either a remedial course in math, writing or reading, according to U.S. Department of Education statistics.

Officials in Louisiana's higher education system say the state's open admissions policy is largely responsible, since any student, regardless of grade-point average or standardized testing score, must be admitted to any public college in the state.

Louisiana is one of seven states in the nation that require only a high school diploma for entering freshmen from in-state high schools. The other states are Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Idaho, North Dakota and Wyoming.

In the South, a study now being completed by the Southern Regional Education Board shows that colleges having to teach what already should have been taught is not just a problem in Louisiana.

Based on a survey of 356 colleges in 15 Southern states, 29.7 percent reported that more than 50 percent of their freshmen students were enrolled in a remedial course.

"That's pretty condemning," said research associate Ansley Abraham, who is compiling the study.

Five of the colleges surveyed, including four junior colleges and one four-year college, reported that more than 90 percent of their entering freshmen required remediation.

Although Abraham's study does not specify which colleges or in what state they are located, a preliminary report prepared for the Louisiana Board of Regents shows that Southern University in New Orleans had 90.7 of its freshmen class in remedial courses in 1985.

In Northwest Louisiana, the report shows that LSUS had 48.4 percent in remedial education; Southern-Shreveport, 71.3 percent; Northwestern, 44.6 percent; Louisiana Tech, 33.2 percent; and Grambling, 84.2 percent. At LSU in Baton Rouge, 49.7 percent of the freshmen required remediation.

Remedial courses are offered for math, reading, English and, at some colleges, study skills. Students taking the remedial courses in Louisiana colleges receive no credit, and they must successfully complete them before continuing with credit courses.

Every college sets its own criteria to determine which students need remedial help, though most use a combination of standardized test scores and placement tests. The criteria vary widely among Louisiana colleges and among colleges in other states.

For example, at LSUBR, students who score a 20 or below composite on their ACT must take a reading placement test to determine whether they need remediation.

At LSUS, Grambling and Northwestern, students are flagged for possible remediation if they score 15 or below. At Southern-Shreveport and Louisiana Tech, the cutoff is 16.

In Mississippi, a state where about one-third of the freshmen students are enrolled in remedial courses, students who score 12 or below are targeted for remediation. Many students now placed in remedial courses in Louisiana colleges would not be targeted in Mississippi.

Because of those wide variations in criteria, Abraham said true comparisons are impossible.

"Our notion of what college-level work is varies astronomically," he said, explaining that some colleges require remediation for students who place in the ACT's bottom 7th percentile nationwide while others target students in the bottom 44th percentile.

College educators say remedial education improves the quality of the regular college-level courses since without it, students who need special help would go directly into regular classes.

Carruth McGehee, dean of academic services at LSUBR, be-

● Please see 51%, 3-A

In pursuit of education

This story is the first part of a continuing look at Louisiana's problems in education. The Times does not pretend to have all the answers to this nagging and often controversial issue.

If readers have ideas to share, we would welcome their calls to Tell The Times or letters to The Enterprise Team, P.O. Box 222, 071130.

Freshmen taking remedial courses

College	Percentage
SUNO	90.7
Grambling	84.2
SUSBO	71.3
SUBR	69.1
Nicholls	63.1
LSUA	62.0
UNO	60.8
Northeast	53.0
LSUBR	49.7
Southwestern	49.6
LSUS	48.4
Southeastern	46.1
Northwestern	44.6
McNeese	40.1
Delgado	36.8
LSUE	33.5
Louisiana Tech	33.2
State average	51.4

51% require remedial courses

● Continued from Page One

lieves the result would be all too predictable.

"When you let a lot of unprepared students into a course, you have to face either rising failure rates or water down the course," he said. "The latter is very likely to happen."

However, the high percentage of remedial students has prompted concern that too much emphasis and too many state dollars go to help students who should be better prepared before they get to college.

Calculating the cost of remedial education is difficult. But because of smaller classes, one credit hour in a remedial course generates $10 more in state money for the university than one credit hour in a nonremedial course.

Based on that formula, Higher Education Commissioner William Arceneaux said state funds generated for remedial education represent $14 million, about 3 percent of the $560 million higher education appropriation.

State Sen. Tony Guarisco, D-Morgan City, said economics was only a secondary concern when he tried to pass a bill through the Legislature that would require the Board of Regents to set admission standards for all state colleges and universities by the fall of 1989.

He said he believes that admitting too many unprepared students into college weakens the whole educational system.

The bill passed the Senate. It was defeated Thursday, though, by the House Education Committee. Rep. Alphonse Jackson, D-Shreveport, said that admissions requirements would discriminate against blacks.

However, LSUBR, considered the state's flagship university, already has taken steps to establish admission requirements that its officials hope will reduce the need for remedial courses.

Beginning in 1988, the school will require entering freshmen to have taken high school courses that include physics, two years of algebra, a year of either geometry, trigonometry or calculus and four years of English, including a healthy dose of writing.

But officials say the university still will technically have open admissions since students with even a D- grade point will be admitted as long as they experience the required courses.

The stiffer high school course requirements represent a national trend among colleges throughout the nation.

The 16 campuses of the University of North Carolina system in 1988 will begin requiring entering freshmen to have taken a stricter high school curriculum, one similar to that required by LSUBR.

Art Padilla, vice president for academic affairs there, said the Board of Governors passed the requirements because they felt the colleges had too many remedial students. About one out of seven freshmen in North Carolina take remedial courses, he estimates.

"While it is not much in terms of total dollars out of the total higher educational expenditures, it is still too much," he said. "And that ought to be taking place at the high school level."

No one believes that the need for remedial education for entering college freshmen will ever be eliminated. Nor do most officials feel it ever should be.

It helps older people who return to school after a long period of time and need that added boost to get back into the educational swing, educators say.

It also fills gaps where students come from widely differing educational and social backgrounds.

But state officials hope that the stricter standards for graduation imposed by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education will help minimize their need.

And Arceneaux, as commissioner of higher education, hopes that stronger criteria imposed by colleges like LSUBR will effect a change.

"Once we raise standards, the high schools are sure to follow, and we are seeing this happening," he said. "The kids can meet the standards. It is just a question of somebody demanding that they do so."

●

(Next: Reasons for the deficiencies that make remedial courses necessary in the state's colleges.)

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SHREVEPORT TIMES, SUNDAY, JUNE 15, 1986

State opens gate, untaught go to college

By MELANIE MARKLEY
Times Enterprise

NOT In search of education

Traditions die hard in Louisiana. And the long-standing tradition of keeping all state colleges open to any student with a high school diploma is no exception.

Sen. Tony Guarisco tried unsuccessfully for the eighth time this year to get the Legislature to force the Board of Regents to change that.

The Morgan City Democrat considers the open admissions policy a populist idea that damages the state's entire educational system.

"If open admissions was really a great thing for the masses and the multitudes, then we would have the most educated state in the Union," he says.

But Rep. Alphonse Jackson, echoing a philosophy shared by six other states, believes that open admissions should be maintained in every college and university to assure equal opportunity for everyone.

"I just don't think you can have an absolute closed admission policy and not discriminate against poor people and black people," said the Shreveport Democrat.

In Louisiana, however, the colleges do not need legislative approval to limit admissions. The governing boards can do that, and one already has moved in that direction.

Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge will be the first college to buck the tradition when, in 1988, it requires entering freshmen to have taken harder courses in high school before they can enroll.

Aside from regular graduation requirements, students will have to take chemistry, physics and two years of a foreign language. Any grade-point average and standardized test score, however, will be accepted.

Carruth McGehee, dean of academic affairs, believes the higher standards will improve the quality of secondary education in the state and will enhance the character of education at LSU.

Now, he said, LSU stands out among major state universities in terms of the small percentage of freshmen who graduate. Too many enter college too ill-prepared to succeed.

More than 51 percent of the college freshmen in the state have to take at least one remedial course before they can tackle college-level courses. College officials say that students with ACT scores as low as 3 (on a scale of 1 through 36) are admitted to Louisiana's four-year colleges. The national average is 19.1.

Ruth Hanna, who heads the remedial program at Louisiana Tech, estimates that about half the 33.2 percent who took remedial courses there in 1985 should have been counseled to go to a vocational-technical program instead of college.

"We feel it is a shame they weren't directed that way before they came to college, because they get here and they develop a defeatist attitude," she said.

But the reluctance to deny anyone the right to a higher education, regardless of capability, remains well-entrenched in Louisiana.

Board of Regents Chairman E. Edwards Barham echoed that philosophy in a recent interview.

"Louisiana has such a long tradition of open admissions, and I think that people of all political persuasions agree that has been a good investment, to try to make higher education as accessible as you

● Please see GATE, 3-A

ACT scores

COLLEGE	SCORE
LSUBR	19.3
La. Tech	18.4
LSUS	17.5
UNO	16.2
Northeast	16.1
LSUE	16.1
Southwestern	15.9
Nicholls	15.2
Southeastern	15.2
McNeese	14.8
LSUA	14.8
Northwestern	14.6
SUBR	11.5
Grambling	10.5
SUNO	9.5
SUS	8.7
Louisiana	16.0
National	19.1

Chart shows average ACT scores of students entering state colleges. Stories on 24-A.

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Gate opens, untaught go to college

● Continued from Page One

possibly can," he said.

But in the future, he added, the state will have to consider what it can afford.

Universities are funded about $10 per credit hour more for remedial classes than regular freshmen courses, even though the additional funding does not have to be spent on remedial education.

The state will pay the extra money for remedial students for up to three tries in a remedial course.

Barham predicts that at least one or two other schools will eventually adopt selective admissions like LSUBR, though most are expected to keep their doors open to everyone. The colleges do, however, have selective admissions to certain degree programs.

The Board of Regents in its master plan has recommended selective admissions at some colleges. But it specifies that care must be taken to assure that at least one institution in each geographical area maintains open admissions.

When Louisiana entered into its 1981 consent decree with the U.S. Department of Justice, it agreed to maintain an open-door policy until December 1987 as part of the desegregation order.

Nathaniel Douglas, head of the Justice Department's education opportunities section, said that after the consent decree is lifted, admission standards will be acceptable only as long as they don't discriminate.

Commissioner of Higher Education William Arceneaux believes the Justice Department's requiring the state to maintain open admissions had a lot to do with the state's consideration to move toward selective admissions.

"There is a philosophical thing working," he said. "You just tell anybody they can't do something and, well, they are going to do it."

Eventually, he said, he would like to see admissions at some Louisiana colleges based on a combination of ACT scores, grade point average, high school curriculum and personal interviews.

One problem Louisiana has in limiting college admissions, though, is its lack of a community college system. Other states limit access to most of their four-year colleges but keep their community colleges open to give everyone a shot at a further education.

In Louisiana, there are six two-year colleges. Two — Bossier Community College and St. Bernard Community College — are administered by parish school boards. Four — Delgado, Southern University-Shreveport, LSU at Alexandria and LSU at Eunice — are administered by the state.

But Larry Tremblay, coordinator of research for the Board of Regents, said of the four, only Delgado qualifies as a true community college. The rest are primarily transfer colleges.

While most states have colleges that screen entering students on the basis of probable success, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Idaho, North Dakota and Wyoming share Louisiana's philosophy.

But Arceneaux said it is difficult to compare Louisiana with those states because of size and socioeconomic differences. Those states draw students with much higher average ACT scores than does Louisiana. And their remedial education programs are much smaller.

The Nebraska Legislature, in fact, ordered the state's higher education commission to eliminate remedial education. Sue Geffner, director of the commission, said there was no way, with open admissions, to do away with remedial courses. It only forced colleges to refer to them by another name.

In the western Plains states that maintain open admissions, education officials say that letting anyone go to college remains a sign of rugged individualism.

"I don't think it will ever go away, certainly not in the near future," said Gene Kasper with the Board of Regents in Kansas.

Adds Geffner in Nebraska, "It is a part of the fabric of this state," she said. "I don't think it is going to change."

But in Louisiana, education officials say, the tide is changing.

LSU freshmen top national ACT average

Other scores pull Louisiana below 35 percentile

By MELANIE MARKLEY
Times Enterprise Writer

Only one public college in Louisiana admitted a freshmen class in 1985 with American College Testing scores above the national average.

The average score for Louisiana State University at Baton Rouge was 19.3, just slightly above the national average of 19.1.

The remaining public colleges ranged from 8.7 to 18.4, bringing the state's average to 16 and ranking it in the bottom 35 percentile nationwide. The ACT range is 1 through 36.

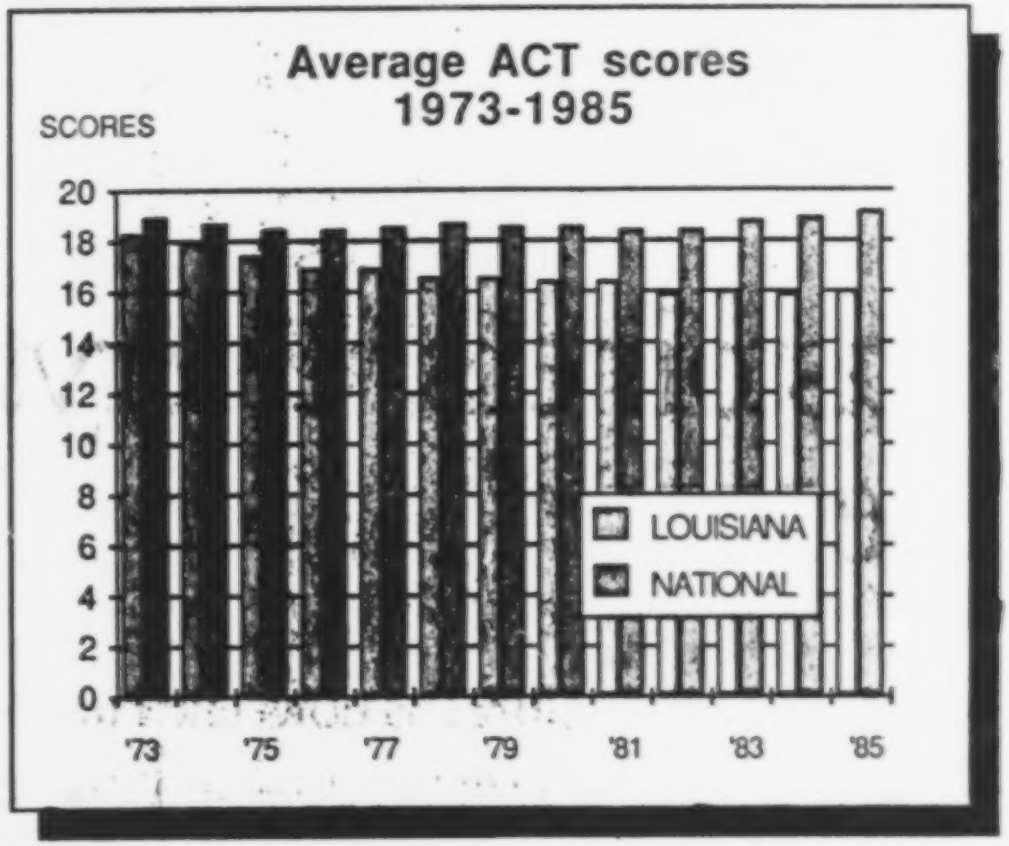
Education Department officials hope that will begin to turn around in 1988 when high schools begin graduating students required to take stiffer course requirements, courses that correspond to what is tested by the ACT.

Before 1984, students could go through high school without ever taking an algebra course. The 1988 graduating class will have to have taken Algebra 1 and Algebra 2 before getting a diploma.

Paul Vanderberg, section chief for curriculum at the Louisiana Department of Education, said graduation requirements were lowered in the early to mid-1970s during a nationwide movement aimed at preparing people for life rather than college.

As a result, standardized testing scores dropped everywhere. But the decline was even more dramatic in Louisiana.

Times computer graphic



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Among those taking the ACT in Louisiana, the average score in 1972 was 18, compared to 16.5 last year. The national average was 19.1 in 1972 and 18.6 last year.

Vanderberg said one reason Louisiana's average score remains below the national average is that a higher percentage of the state's students take the ACT, which all public colleges in the state require.

The main influence, he figures, is the state's open college admission policy. More students in Louisiana plan for college. And, since more than 51 percent of the college freshmen have to take a remedial course, most are ill-prepared for it.

Statistics on the percentage of high school graduates who go to college are hard to come by. The best guess, according to the state Department of Education, is about 45 percent.

Larry Tremblay, coordinator of research for the Board of Regents, said about one-third of the graduates go directly from a Louisiana high school to a state public college or university. But that does not account for the students who work a few years and then go to college.

Education Department officials say it is apparent that many students with high ACT scores either leave the state or go to private colleges, since the average score of Louisiana students taking the test is slightly higher than the average among freshmen entering public colleges here.

Also, education officials say that many of the best students are drawn to colleges in Texas, the East or the West, where the SAT is required. Louisiana graduates taking the SAT rank well above the national average.

Cultural difference

The predominately black colleges in Louisiana have the lowest average ACT scores. State Rep. Alphonse Jackson, D-Shreveport, finds that as no surprise.

"Youngsters who emanate from culturally deprived environments historically score low on standardized tests," said Jackson, a former educator.

Jackson said that poor people, both black and white, have not had the experiences in fine arts and other areas that would benefit them in taking a standardized test.

"I just think we've got more than our share of poor people and unemployed people and illiterate individuals, and until we make a commitment at the secondary level moneywise and policywise, we are going to continue to have a problem," he said.

Vanderberg said he believes the policy changes that strengthen the curriculum requirements in high schools will help solve the problem. He also believes the stiffer high school courses that LSU will begin requiring for admission in 1988 should improve scores.

> "I don't think we should be blamed for 'others' when we don't even know who they are."
>
> **Paul Vanderberg**
> Department of Education

Steady rise

An increase in Louisiana high schools offering college-level courses should provide a further boost, he said.

But Vanderberg said the average ACT score doesn't paint the whole picture.

The percentage of Louisiana students scoring above 20 has continued to rise steadily in the past three years — from 25 percent in 1983 to 28 percent in 1985.

But Vanderberg said it is difficult to compare previous years' scores with 1985 because ACT changed its method of calculating the statewide average last year.

Using the old method, Louisiana high school juniors and seniors who take the test have shown a slight, but steady improvement over recent years, he said.

But Louisiana has a higher percentage in the "others" category than the national average. And it is that category, which includes older people returning to school and people moving into the state, that shows the large drop in average scores.

"I don't think we should be blamed for 'others' when we don't even know who they are," Vanderberg said.

Yet, Louisiana's relatively low ACT scores remain a concern among state educators.

The Education Department now provides tapes and manuals to show classroom teachers how to prepare students for the ACT.

And efforts to stiffen curriculum requirements are viewed as an important step in making students take the courses that will give them the background they need to perform well.

But it will be at least 1988 before educators will know whether better preparation for the ACT will make Louisiana students more competitive with the rest of the nation.

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